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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4895

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 6377

CINCPAC FOR: POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PFOR, AF, PK, IN, UK, UR, IR

SUBJ: EVALUATION OF DAUD'S GOVERNMENT AND COMMENTS ON  
PASHTUNISTAN POLICY

1. INTERNAL CONDITIONS: TO DATE DAUD'S NEW GOVERNMENT HAS MADE A DISTINCTLY UNFAVORABLE IMPRESSION ON MOST OBSERVERS, BOTH FOREIGN AND AFGHAN (THOSE FEW WHO ARE WILLING TO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS) AND ONE IS HARD PRESSED TO FIND ANYONE TO DEFEND IT. THE MOST OFTEN HEARD EXPLANATION FOR APPOINTING SUCH A GENERALLY INFERIOR AND INCOMPETENT CABINET IS THAT THE YOUNG OFFICERS WHO MADE THE COUP HAD TO BE REWARDED, WHILE THE MOST DANGEROUS ONE IS THAT THEY ARE THE NASSER'S TO DAUD'S NAGUIB.

MOST LIKELY THE TRUTH LIES IN THE MIDDLE; THE YOUNG OFFICERS DO HAVE POWER AS A RESULT OF THE COUP AND DAUD HAS TO RECKON WITH THEM. BUT THEY ALSO FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DO WITHOUT DAUD. THERE IS GROWING EVIDENCE THAT DAUD IS, AND HAS BEEN AWARE OF

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THEIR SHORTCOMINGS AND RUMORS CIRCULATE, SOMETIMES FOR OUR BENEFIT, THAT THEY WILL BE REMOVED IN A FEW MONTHS ONCE THEIR INCAPABILITY HAS BEEN REVEALED. IT MAY OR MAY NOT TURN OUT THAT WAY.

IN THE MEANTIME, THERE IS GREAT CONFUSION, EACH MINISTRY DOING ITS OWN THING IN THE TRADITION OF NOVICES WASTING MUCH TIME AND ENERGY ON UNESSENTIAL THINGS WHICH BESPEAK "ACTION" LIKE CONFISCATING HAM RADIO SETS OR PAINTING ALL TAXIS BLACK AND WHITE. GENERALLY, THE LEVEL OF TENSION HAS INCREASED MARKEDLY IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS, WITH FOREIGNERS ESPECIALLY COMING IN FOR INCREASED HARASSMENT AND SUSPICION.

ONE SHOULD NOT ASSUME THAT THE UNTRIED MINISTERS, IF THEY REMAIN IN OFFICE, WILL NOT LEARN SOMETHING AND EVENTUALLY GIVE A BETTER PERFORMANCE, EVEN THOUGH THE PROCESS IS BOUND TO BE COSTLY. BUT THE DANGER TO THE REGIME COMES, IN MY OPINION, FROM A DIFFERENT DIRECTION. THE COUP HAS INVARIABLY ROUSED HOPES, EXCESSIVE HOPES. THE EMPHASIS BY DAUD AND HIS FOLLOWERS ON THE EVILS OF THE PREVIOUS REGIME'S CORRUPTION (TRUE ENOUGH) HAS CREATED THE EXPECTATION THAT ONCE THE CORRUPTION IS REMOVED (HA\*) EVERYTHING WILL BE ROSY. A REALISTIC ANALYSIS HOWEVER REVEALS THAT CORRUPTION, WHILE A CONTRIBUTING CAUSE TO AFGHANISTAN'S BACKWARDNESS, IS NOT THE CENTRAL CAUSE. RATHER IT IS PRIMARILY THE HISTORIC FAILURE ON THE PART OF AFGHANISTAN'S TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP TO FULLY COMMIT BOTH THEMSELVES AND THE NATION'S INTELLECTUAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO THE MODERNIZATION EFFORT. POVERTY, IGNORANCE, SLOTH, LACK OF MANAGEMENT SKILLS, PAUCITY OF MARKETABLE RESOURCES, ETC., ARE ALL PROBLEMS, BUT NO NATION CAN ADVANCE WITHOUT COMMITTING ITS OWN RESOURCES TO THE EFFORT. THESE THINGS HAVE NOT CHANGED AND IN THE AFGHAN ECONOMY THERE ARE NO EASY OR SPEEDY SOLUTIONS. HENCE, FAST, PERHAPS UNFAIR, DISAPPOINTMENT IS BOUND TO FOLLOW. WHEN ONE ADDS THIS DISAPPOINTMENT TO THE LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN REMOVED, HUMILIATED OR REDUCED IN STATURE, ONE GETS A READY-MADE EXPLOSIVE MIXTURE. AND IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT DISAFFECTED ELEMENTS WILL NOT SEEK CONTACTS WITH DISAFFECTED MILITARY OR POLICE UNITS IN THE HOPE OF A REPEAT PERFORMANCE. THUS MORE COUPS ARE LIKELY, WHETHER OF THE THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT.

STILL, DAUD HAS A CHANCE - IF HE IMPROVES PERFORMANCE. IF HE SEEKS -- AFTER A FEW MONTHS OR A YEAR, RECONCILIATION

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(ESPECIALLY WITH DISAFFECTED MILITARY GROUPS), IF HE CALMS DOWN TO A MORE PRUDENT FOREIGN POLICY -- HE CAN MAKE IT. IF HE IS REALLY IN FULL COMMAND THE CHANCE EXISTS. BUT THE LONGER HE HAS TO SHARE POWER WITH INEXPERIENCED AND UNPREDICTABLE ELEMENTS, THE MORE CONSOLIDATION MAY ELUDE HIM AND OTHERS WILL AWAIT THEIR TURN.

2. EXTERNAL RELATIONS: ALL AFGHAN GOVERNMENT I HAVE KNOWN HAVE REACTED NERVOUSLY AND APPREHENSIVELY TOWARD ANY ATTACK BY THE GOP AGAINST PASHTUN AND BALUCH ELEMENTS (ESPECIALLY NAP) IN THE BORDER REGIONS. IN THE PAST THIS HAS BEEN PRIMARILY THE RESULT OF DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS; THE PRO-PASHTUNISTAN GROUPS IN AFGHANISTAN BEING LARGELY, THOUGH NOT EXCLUSIVELY, IDENTICAL WITH CONSERVATIVE AND NATIONALIST ELEMENTS WHO FAVORED THE CONTINUATION OF THE PUSHTOON DOMINATION OVER OTHER GROUPS IN AFGHANISTAN.

AT THE SAME TIME THE REALIZATION OF THE FULL PASHTUNISTAN DREAM WOULD DANGEROUSLY SHIFT THE POWER BALANCE IN AFGHANISTAN AWAY FROM THE KING AND HIS FAMILY IN FAVOR OF THE BETTER EDUCATED, ECONOMICALLY THE POSSIBLY MILITARILY STRONGER ELEMENTS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BORDER. AS THE KING'S PRINCIPAL INTEREST LAY IN BALANCE, THIS WAS NOT A DESIRABLE PROSPECT. HENCE, ROYAL POLICY WAS TO MAKE ENOUGH NOISE TO SATISFY THE NATIONALISTS, WHILE REFRAINING FROM CONCRETE ACTION, HOPING GOP WOULD NOT CARRY ITS MEASURES AGAINST NAP, ETC., TOO FAR. I HAVE FREQUENTLY REPORTED THIS IN THE PAST. THE LANGUAGE USED BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS NOT MATERIALLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT WHICH THE KING USED IN THE PAST. THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE PLAYERS HOWEVER ARE. THE KING HAD A REALISTIC VIEW OF AFGHANISTAN'S MILITARY CAPABILITIES, AN ANALYSIS WHICH FITTED WELL INTO, OR CAUSED, HIS POLICY OF BALANCE. THE NEW NATIONALISTS HOWEVER HAVE, OR PROFESS TO HAVE, A DIFFERENT PICTURE OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE AREA.

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4896  
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

THEY REGARD, OR PROFESS TO REGARD, PAKISTAN AS NON-VIABLE AND SEEM TO BE SERIOUS ABOUT PASHTUNISTAN. POSSIBLY THEY HAVE DRAWN EXCESSIVE CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EVENTS IN BANGLADESH (CF. FREQUENT REFERENCES BY DAUD, NAIM, ETC.) OVERLOOKING THE FACT THAT THE NW F AND BALUCHISTAN DO NOT BORDER ON INDIA BUT ON AFGHANISTAN AND THAT AFGHANISTAN IS NO INDIA.

IN ADDITION, DAUD AND HIS PEOPLE ARE SUSPICIOUS OF IRAN AND THE SHAH AND ASCRIBE TO HIM THE GREY EMINENCE ROLE BEHIND BHUTTO'S FORAY AGAINST THE NAP IN BALUCHISTAN. INFLUENCED BY THEIR RECENT COUP EXPERIENCE THEY TRANSFER IT, ONLY TOO READILY, TO AN ANALYSIS OF IRAN, PREFERRING TO SEE THE SHAH AS AN UNPOPULAR, POWER-DRIVEN RULER (WAHID ABDULLAH, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER WHO IS MORE PASSIONATE THAN OTHERS BUT MAY THEREFORE REFLECT REAL UNDERLYING SENTIMENTS, CALLS THE SHAH A "MADMAN") WHO WILL SOON SHARE THE FATE OF ZAHIRE SHAH, IF NOT WORSE. THIS MAY BE AN EXTREME VIEW BUT IT IS SHARED BY SOME.

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THUS, IN THE VIEWS OF THE DAUD PEOPLE, AFGHANISTAN IS THE SOLID POINT, "THE KEY TO THE REGION" AS ABDULLAH PUT IT, WHOM THE USG SHOULD SUPPORT RATHER THAN PAKISTAN OR IRAN WHICH ARE VIEWED AS UNSTABLE, TRANSITIONAL REGIMES.

US POLICYMAKERS WILL NOT READILY SEE MUCH REALITY IN THAT PICTURE BUT THAT IS WHAT, IN MY OPINION, HAS CREDENCE IN THE DAUD CAMP.

IN CARRYING OUT MY INSTRUCTIONS REFTTEL, ALTHOUGH IN THE LIMITED AND SOMEWHAT INDIRECT FORM REPORTED, I HAVE THEREFORE INEVITABLY ADMINISTERED SHOCK TREATMENT. THIS HAS UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN AGGRAVATED, WHETHER WE WANT IT OR NOT, BY DAUD'S SUSPICION THAT THE US HAS ALWAYS BEEN AGAINST HIM BECAUSE OF THE MISTAKEN IMPRESSION THAT HE IS A RUSSIAN PAWN OR WORSE. DAUD, NAIM, ETC., MAY THEREFORE HAVE DRAWN THE ERRONEOUS CONCLUSION THAT THE USG IS REVERTING TO WHAT THEY CONSIDER THE POLICIES OF THE FIFTIES AND EARLY SIXTIES.

I WOULD PERSONALLY HA  
ADMINISTERED COULD HAVE WAITED UNTIL THE DAUD REGIME HAD BECOME MORE CONSOLIDATED (OR ITS LACK OF STABILITY WAS MORE CLEARLY RECOGNIZED). BUT I REALIZE THAT IT IS BETTER TO LET A DEPARTING AMBASSADOR SAY SOME UNPLEASANT TRUTHS THAN INCOMING ONE. AT ANY RATE, THE ARRESTS IN BALUCHISTAN TELESCOPED EVENTS AND ONE MIGHT WONDER WHETHER SHUTTO'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS WERE THE SOLE FACTOR IN THESE ACTIONS, OR THAT HE MIGHT ALSO HAVE SOUGHT TO PRODUCE A SHOWDOWN WHICH WOULD AT LEAST DEMONSTRATE DAUD'S LIMITED OPTIONS. CERTAINLY DAUD AND COMPANY, STILL PREOCCUPIED WITH INTERNAL POWER STRUGGLES, DID NOT SEEM TO WANT AND OBVIOUSLY WERE NOT PREPARED TO FACE THE ISSUE SO SOON.

WHATEVER THE EXPLANATION, WE SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT NOW SERIOUS POLICY DIFFERENCES EXIST BETWEEN THE US AND THE GOA AND THAT FURTHER PUSHING IN A DELICATE SITUATION WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. WE KNOW FROM PAST EXPERIENCE THAT DAUD DOES NOT REACT LIGHTLY TO BEING LEANED ON. I DO NOT CREDIT THE IMPLICATIONS BY ABDULLAH (A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF HIS MASTER BUT NOT A SUBTLE BRAIN LIKE FARHADI) THAT IF THE USG DOES NOT SUPPORT AFGHANISTAN, THE LATTER WILL THROW HERSELF INTO RUSSIA'S ARMS. (WHICH IS ALSO 1950-60 RHETORIC AND ILLUSTRATES AN OUTDATED FRAME OF MIND). AFGHANISTAN'S TRADITIONAL DESIRE FOR INDEPENDENCE SHOULD BE WORTH MORE THAN THAT. BUT NOR SHOULD WE UNDERESTIMATE THE POSSIBILITY OF IRRATIONAL

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CONDUCT, I.E., THE READINESS AND BRAVURA TO CUT OFF ONE'S NOSE TO SPITE ONE'S FACE (AND THE POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER UNLIKELY, THAT DAUD, BESET BY GROWING INTERNAL PROBLEMS, MAY SEEK FOREIGN ADVENTURE.

WHAT SHOULD THE USG DO? IN MY OPINION WE HAVE MADE ALL THE POINTS WHICH WERE NEEDED TO BE MADE. NOW WE SHOULD BACK OFF COMPLETELY. NO MORE REMARKS ABOUT PAKISTAN OR IRAN FOR SOME TIME TO COME. AFTER ALL, THE PAKS AND IRANIANS CAN WELL TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES. IF BORDER QUESTION BECOMES AGUTE, WE MAY BE FACED WITH A SITUATION IN WHICH, AT LEAST ON THE AFGHAN SIDE, THERE WOULD BE LITTLE OF POSITIVE VALUE WE COULD DO WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING OUR PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN. IN OTHER WORDS, OUR PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN HAS LONG-RANGE REASON IN CREATING BALANCE AND CONTRIBUTING TO AREA STABILITY. AS AFGHANS TAKE TIME TO REFLECT THEY MUST COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THEIR INDEPENDENCE IS JEOPARDIZED WITHOUT A SIGNIFICANT AMERICAN PRESENCE. BUT IF WE USE THE THREAT OF WITHDRAWAL IN A SHORT-RANGE FASHION, I.E., AS A PUNCH TO CHANGE AFGHAN FOREIGN POLICY, THE DANGER OF IRRATIONAL FLASH -- REACTION IS VERY REAL AND CAPABLE OF DAMAGING BOTH OUR SHORT AND LONG-RANGE OBJECTIVES. IF DAUD IS REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT PUSHING PAKISTAN HE WILL HAVE A SIZABLE ANTI-WAR SENTIMENT ON HIS HANDS BECAUSE MANY AFGHANS ARE NOT REALLY AS GUNG HO AS HE PRETENDS. AND IN THE MEANTIME THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ALREADY EXPRESSED AMERICAN DISAPPROVAL WILL SINK IN AS FEW AFGHANS SEE ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE TO SOVIET DOMINATION.

AND FINALLY, THE OBJECTIVE FACTS ARE THAT ALMOST ANY REAL INITIATIVE DAUD CAN TAKE AGAINST PAKISTAN IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO END IN DISASTER. AND HE IS NO FOOL. ALSO, IT APPEARS UNLIKELY THAT BHUTTO, GIVEN CURRENT DEVASTATING FLOOD CONDITIONS IN SIND AND PUNJAB, WOULD BE WILLING OR ABLE AT PRESENT TO LAUNCH NEW MILITARY CAMPAIGN IN FRONTIER AND BALUCHISTAN, WHILE DAUD AND OTHER CONTENDING GROUPS IN AFGHAN POWER STRUCTURE UNLIKELY TO HAVE TIME OR ENERGY RIGHT NOW TO DEVOTE TO STIRRING UP TRIBES ANY FURTHER IN FRONTIER AREA.

THEREFORE, WE SHOULD TAKE DAUD SERIOUSLY -- BUT NOT TOO SERIOUSLY. CONTINUE OUR WORK BUT NOT BE OVEREAGER REGARDING NEW PROJECTS. AND WAIT FOR THE DUST TO SETTLE. THIS MAY NOT BE THE LAST COUP (SEE ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT) AND DESPITE TEMPORARY

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DIFFICULTIES AN ANORMOUS RESERVOIR OF GOOD WILL TOWARD THE US  
EXISTS IN AFGHANISTAN.  
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